



NEWS RELEASE

City of South Fulton Government

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South Fulton Providing Counseling to Help Firefighters Deal with Job's Mental Challenges

(City of South Fulton, GA – November 10, 2021) – While tens of thousands of firefighters are injured across the nation each year, not all their wounds are physical.

Because of the nature of their jobs, fire personnel experience much greater exposure to physical trauma and even death. These encounters can have lasting mental impacts. City of South Fulton officials hope to help firefighters through those rough times by offering counseling services.

“On any call, firefighters face a range of potential stressors, from adrenalin rushes and related physical impacts to the mental suffering that comes with caring for the injured or their families,” said Fire Chief Chad Jones. “Just like our personnel are there for residents in difficult times, we want to ensure they have the skills needed to cope with the full range of emotions they experience on the job.”

City council members approved Tuesday a contract with Moore to Life Counseling and Consulting to provide psychological services. Included in the \$35,000 annual agreement are pre-hire assessments, mental health training and awareness and response to mental welfare checks and needs.

In a survey of 7,000 firefighters conducted by the International Association of Firefighters, an overwhelming number of participants reported that stressful or traumatic experiences on the job impacted their mental wellbeing.

The study found 19 percent had thoughts of suicide, 27 percent struggled with substance abuse, 59 percent experienced family and relationship problems and 65 percent were haunted by memories of bad calls. Many expressed a belief that they are expected to tough it out and that asking for help might be seen as a sign of weakness.

“In fact, the opposite is true,” Jones said. “Knowing when we need assistance and reaching out for it shows we’re human – susceptible to the same challenges everyone faces. We’re making sure our personnel understand that and have all the necessary resources available to remain strong – physically and mentally.”

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